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## Biden's new Title IX rules protect LGBTQ+ students, but avoid addressing transgender athletes



Demonstrators advocating for transgender rights and healthcare stand outside of the Ohio Statehouse on Jan. 24, 2024, in Columbus, Ohio.

Associated Press

By COLLIN BINKLEY  
AP Education Writer

The rights of LGBTQ+ students will be protected by federal law and victims of campus sexual assault will gain new safeguards under rules finalized Friday by the Biden administration. The new provisions are part of a revised Title IX regulation issued by

the Education Department, fulfilling a campaign pledge by President Joe Biden. He had promised to dismantle rules created by former Education Secretary Betsy DeVos, who added new protections for students accused of sexual misconduct. Notably absent from Biden's policy, however, is any mention of transgen-

der athletes.

The administration originally planned to include a new policy forbidding schools from enacting outright bans on transgender athletes, but that provision was put on hold. The delay is widely seen as a political maneuver during an election year in which Republicans have rallied

around bans on transgender athletes in girls' sports.

Instead, Biden is officially undoing sexual assault rules put in place by his predecessor and current election-year opponent, former President Donald Trump.

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LIVE ENTERTAINMENT 7 DAYS A WEEK							PROFESSIONAL COMPLIMENTARY PICTURES ON TUESDAY AND FRIDAY
<b>SUNDAY:</b> MARRYBELL MADURO SINGER 6:30 - 8:30pm	<b>MONDAY:</b> ANGELA FLORES VIOLINIST 6:30 - 8:30pm	<b>TUESDAY:</b> JEAN PAUL SAXOPHONIST 6:30 - 8:30pm	<b>WEDNESDAY:</b> EDDIE KROON SINGER 4:00 - 6:00pm MAILLEYN ALVARADO VIOLINIST 6:30 - 8:30pm KARAOKE 9:00 - 11:00pm	<b>THURSDAY:</b> MARRYBELL MADURO SINGER 6:30 - 8:30pm	<b>FRIDAY:</b> RICKY THOMAS GUITARIST 7:00 - 9:00pm	<b>SATURDAY:</b> EDDIE KROON SINGER 4:00 - 6:00pm ANGELA FLORES VIOLINIST 6:30 - 8:30pm	

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# Biden's new Title IX rules protect LGBTQ+ students, but avoid addressing transgender athletes

Continued from Front

The final policy drew praise from victims' advocates, while Republicans said it erodes the rights of accused students.

The new rule makes "crystal clear that everyone can access schools that are safe, welcoming and that respect their rights," Education Secretary Miguel Cardona said. "No one should face bullying or discrimination just because of who they are, who they love," Cardona told reporters. "Sadly, this happens all too often."

Biden's regulation is meant to clarify schools' obligations under Title IX, the 1972 sex discrimination law originally passed to address women's rights. It applies to colleges and elementary and high schools that receive federal money. The update is to take effect in August.

Among the biggest changes is new recognition that Title IX protects LGBTQ+ students — a source of deep conflict with Republicans.

The 1972 law doesn't directly address the issue, but the new rules clarify that Title IX also forbids discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity. LGBTQ+ students who face discrimination will be entitled to a response from their school under Title IX, and those failed by their schools can seek recourse from the federal government.

Many Republicans say Congress never intended such protections under Title IX. A federal judge previously blocked Biden administration guidance to the same effect after 20 Republican-led states challenged the policy.

Rep. Virginia Foxx, a Republican from North Carolina and chair of the House Education and the Workforce Committee, said the new regulation threatens decades of advancement for women and girls.

"This final rule dumps kerosene on the already raging fire that is Democrats' contemptuous culture war that aims to radically redefine sex and gender," Foxx said in a



House Education and the Workforce Committee Chair Rep. Virginia Foxx R-N.C., speaks on Capitol Hill in Washington, April 17, 2024.

Associated Press

statement.

In the last few years, many Republican-controlled states have adopted laws restricting the rights of transgender children, including banning gender-affirming medical care for minors. And at least 11 states restrict which bathrooms and locker rooms transgender students can use, banning them from using facilities that align with their gender identity.

But the rule makes clear that treating transgender students differently from their classmates is discrimination, putting the state bathroom restrictions in jeopardy, said Francisco M. Negrón Jr., an attorney who specializes in education law.

The revision was proposed nearly two years ago but has been slowed by a comment period that drew 240,000 responses, a record for the Education Department.

Many of the changes are meant to ensure that schools and colleges respond to complaints of sexual misconduct. In general, the

rules widen the type of misconduct that institutions are required to address, and it grants more protections to students who bring accusations.

Chief among the changes is a wider definition of sexual harassment. Schools now must address any unwelcome sex-based conduct that is so "severe or pervasive" that it limits a student's equal access to an education.

Under the DeVos rules, conduct had to be "severe, pervasive and objectively offensive," a higher bar that pushed some types of misconduct outside the purview of Title IX.

Colleges will no longer be required to hold live hearings to allow students to cross-examine one another through representatives — a signature provision from the DeVos rules.

Live hearings are allowed under the Biden rules, but they're optional and carry new limits. Students must be able to participate from

hearings remotely, for example, and schools must bar questions that are "unclear or harassing."

As an alternative to live hearings, college officials can interview students separately, allowing each student to suggest questions and get a recording of the responses. Those hearings were a major point of contention with victims' advocates, who said it forced sexual assault survivors to face their attackers and discouraged people from reporting assaults. Supporters said it gave accused students a fair process to question their accusers, arguing that universities had become too quick to rule against accused students. Victims' advocates applauded the changes and urged colleges to implement them quickly.

"After years of pressure from students and survivors of sexual violence, the Biden Administration's Title IX update will make schools safer and more accessible for young people, many of

whom experienced irreparable harm while they fought for protection and support," said Emma Grasso Levine, a senior manager at the group Know Your IX.

Despite the focus on safeguards for victims, the new rules preserve certain protections for accused students. All students must have equal access to present evidence and witnesses under the new policy, and all students must have equal access to evidence. All students will be allowed to bring an advisor to campus hearings, and colleges must have an appeals process.

In general, accused students won't be able to be disciplined until after they're found responsible for misconduct, although the regulation allows for "emergency" removals if it's deemed a matter of campus safety.

The American Council on Education, which represents higher education institutions, praised the new guidelines. But the group criticized the Aug. 1 compliance deadline. The timeline "disregards the difficulties inherent in making these changes on our nation's campuses in such a short period of time," ACE said in a statement.

The latest overhaul continues a back-and-forth political battle as presidential administrations repeatedly rewrite the rules around campus sexual misconduct.

DeVos criticized the new rule, writing on social media site X that it amounts to "an assault on women and girls." She said the new procedures for handling sexual assault accusations mark a return to "days where sexual misconduct was sent to campus kangaroo courts, not resolved in a way that actually sought justice," she wrote.

The DeVos rules were themselves an overhaul of an Obama-era policy that was intended to force colleges to take accusations of campus sexual assault more seriously. Now, after years of nearly constant changes, some colleges have been pushing for a political middle ground to end the whiplash. □



# Cannabis seizures at checkpoints by U.S.-Mexico border frustrate state-authorized pot industry

By MORGAN LEE  
Associated Press

**SANTA FE, N.M. (AP)** — The U.S. Border Patrol is asserting its authority to seize cannabis shipments — including commercial, state-authorized supplies — as licensed cannabis providers file complaints that more than \$300,000 worth of marijuana has been confiscated in recent months at highway checkpoints in southern New Mexico.

New Mexico's Democratic governor says the disruptions prompted a discussion this week with U.S. Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas, whose impeachment charges were dismissed this week. Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham says she voiced concerns that the scrutiny of cannabis companies appears to be greater in New Mexico than states with regulated markets that aren't along the U.S. border with Mexico.

Authorized cannabis sales in New Mexico have exceeded \$1 billion since regulation and taxation of the recreational market began two years ago. Yet cannabis transport drivers say they have been detained hours while supplies are seized at permanent Border Patrol checkpoints



Traffic crosses from Mexico into the United States at a border station in Santa Teresa, N.M., in this photo made in March 14, 2012.

that filter inbound traffic for unauthorized migrants and illegal narcotics, typically located about 60 miles (100 kilometers) from the U.S. border.

"Secretary Mayorkas assured the governor that federal policies with respect to legalized cannabis have not changed," said Lujan Grisham spokesperson Michael Coleman in an email. "Regardless, the governor and her administration are working on a strategy to protect New

Mexico's cannabis industry." Managers at 10 cannabis businesses including transporters last week petitioned New Mexico's congressional delegation to broker free passage of shipments, noting that jobs and investments are at stake, and that several couriers have been sidelined for "secondary inspection" and fingerprinted at Border Patrol checkpoints.

"We request that operators who have had product federally seized should be

allowed to either get their product returned or be monetarily compensated for the losses they've sustained," the letter states.

U.S. Sen. Martin Heinrich said the Department of Homeland Security should be focused on urgent priorities that don't include cannabis suppliers that comply with state law.

"Stopping the flow of illicit fentanyl into our country should be the Department of Homeland Security's focus at these checkpoints,

not seizing cannabis that's being transported in compliance with state law," the senator said in a statement, referring to the parent agency for U.S. Customs and Border Patrol. "New Mexicans are depending on federal law enforcement to do everything they can to keep our communities safe. Our resources should be used to maximize residents' safety, not distract from it."

A public statement Thursday from the U.S. Border Patrol sector overseeing New Mexico provided a reminder that cannabis is still a "Schedule 1" drug, a designation also assigned to heroin and LSD.

"Although medical and recreational marijuana may be legal in some U.S. States and Canada, the sale, possession, production and distribution of marijuana or the facilitation of the aforementioned remain illegal under U.S. federal law," the agency's statement said. "Consequently, individuals violating the Controlled Substances Act encountered while crossing the border, arriving at a U.S. port of entry, or at a Border Patrol checkpoint may be deemed inadmissible and/or subject to, seizure, fines, and/or arrest." □

Associated Press

# Oklahoma City bombing still 'heavy in our hearts' on 29th anniversary, federal official says

By KEN MILLER  
Associated Press

**OKLAHOMA CITY (AP)** — Federal officials are resolved never to allow a terrorist attack like the Oklahoma City bombing happen again, Deputy Homeland Security Advisor Caitlin Durkovich told survivors and loved ones of the 168 people killed in the April 19, 1995, bombing Friday.

"What happened here in Oklahoma still rests heavy in our hearts; ... what transpired here 29 years ago remains the deadliest act of homegrown terrorism in U.S. history," Durkov-

ich said in front of a field of 168 bronze chairs, each engraved with the name of a bombing victim, at the Oklahoma City National Memorial and Museum.

"Our collective resolve to never let this happen is how we bear witness to the memory and the legacy of those who were killed and those who survived" the bombing, Durkovich told the crowd of more than 100 people as a woman in the crowd wiped tears from her face.

The nearly hour-and-half long ceremony began with 168 seconds of silence for

each of those killed and ended with the reading of the names of each of the victims.

Durkovich was joined by Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland, Oklahoma Gov. Kevin Stitt and Oklahoma City Mayor David Holt for the ceremony on a partly sunny, cool and windy morning for the 29th anniversary of the attack on the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building downtown.

"This is a place where Americans killed Americans," and the lessons learned after the bombing should be used to address the "po-



This April 19, 1995 file photo shows the north side of the Alfred Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City, after it was destroyed by a domestic terrorist's bomb killing 168 people.

Associated Press

litical vitriol" of today, Holt said.

"We don't want more plac-

es, and more days of remembrance. This should be enough," Holt said. □



# U.S. deports about 50 Haitians to nation hit with gang violence, ending monthslong pause in flights

By GISELA SALOMON and ELLIOT SPAGAT

Associated Press

**MIAMI (AP)** — The Biden administration sent about 50 Haitians back to their country on Thursday, authorities said, marking the first deportation flight in several months to the Caribbean nation struggling with surging gang violence. The Homeland Security Department said in a statement that it "will continue to enforce U.S. laws and policy throughout the Florida Straits and the Caribbean region, as well as at the southwest border. U.S. policy is to return noncitizens who do not establish a legal basis to remain in the United States."

Authorities didn't offer details of the flight beyond how many deported Haitians were aboard.

Thomas Cartwright of Witness at the Border, an advocacy group that tracks flight data, said a plane left Alexandria, Louisiana, a hub for deportation operations, and arrived in Cap-Haitien, Haiti, after a stop in Miami. Marjorie Dorsaninvil, a U.S. citizen, said her Haitian fiancé, Gerson Joseph, called in tears from the Miami airport Thursday morning to say he was being deported on a flight to



The Department of Homeland Security logo is seen during a news conference in Washington, Feb. 25, 2015.

Cap-Haitien with other Haitians and some from other countries, including the Bahamas. He promised to call when he arrived but hadn't done so by early evening. Joseph lived in the U.S. more than 20 years and has a 7-year-old U.S. citizen daughter with another woman. He had a deportation order dating from 2005 after losing an asylum bid that his attorney, Philip Issa, said was a result of poor legal representation at the time. Though Joseph wasn't

deported previously, his lawyer was seeking to have that order overturned.

Joseph was convicted of theft and burglary, and ordered to pay restitution of \$270, Issa said. He has been detained since last year. Dorsaninvil said her fiancé has "nobody" in Haiti. "It is devastating for me. We were planning a wedding and now he is gone," she said.

More than 33,000 people fled Haiti's capital in a span of less than two weeks as

gangs pillaged homes and attacked state institutions, according to a report last month from the U.N.'s International Organization for Migration. The majority of those displaced traveled to Haiti's southern region, which is generally peaceful compared with Port-au-Prince, which has an estimated population of 3 million and is largely paralyzed by gang violence.

Haiti's National Police is understaffed and overwhelmed by gangs with

powerful arsenals. Many hospitals ceased operations amid a shortage of medical supplies.

The U.S. operated one deportation flight a month to Haiti from December 2022 through last January, according to Witness at the Border. It said deportation flights were frequent after a camp of 16,000 largely Haitian migrants assembled on the riverbanks of Del Rio, Texas, in September 2021 but became rare as fewer Haitians crossed the border illegally from Mexico.

Haitians were arrested crossing the border from Mexico 286 times during the first three months of the year, less than 0.1% of the more than 400,000 arrests among all nationalities. More than 150,000 have entered the U.S. legally since January 2023 under presidential powers to grant entry for humanitarian reasons, and many others came legally using an online appointment system at land crossings with Mexico called CBP One.

Homeland Security said Thursday that it was "monitoring the situation" in Haiti. The U.S. Coast Guard repatriated 65 Haitians who were stopped at sea off the Bahamas coast last month. □

Associated Press



An E15 nozzle is displayed on a pump at service station in Minneapolis, Monday, Oct. 28, 2013 photo.

Associated Press

By JOSH FUNK  
AP Business Writer

**OMAHA, Neb. (AP)** — The Environmental Protection Agency cleared the way Friday for a higher blend of ethanol to be sold nation-

wide for the third summer in a row, citing global conflicts that it says are putting pressure on the world's fuel supply.

The agency announced an emergency waiver that will

## The EPA is again allowing summer sales of higher ethanol gasoline blend, citing global conflicts

exempt gasoline blended with 15% ethanol from an existing summertime ban. Gasoline with 10% ethanol is already sold nationwide, but the higher blend has been prohibited in the summer because of concerns it could worsen smog during warm weather.

EPA Administrator Michael Regan said the waiver was warranted because of "Russia's unjustified, unprovoked, and unconscionable war against Ukraine" and the ongoing conflict in the Middle East, which he said are putting pressure on the global

fuel supply. He said the diminished U.S. refining capacity is also a factor.

The biofuels industry and politicians in the Midwestern states where ethanol is produced from corn praised the EPA's decision. They have portrayed ethanol as a product that helps farmers, reduces prices at the pump and lessens greenhouse gases because the fuel burns more cleanly than gasoline.

"Allowing uninterrupted sales of E15 will help extend gasoline supplies, prevent fuel shortages, protect air quality and reduce carbon

emissions," said Renewable Fuels Association President and CEO Geoff Cooper.

Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds called the decision "a huge victory for Iowa farmers, American energy independence, and consumers." Environmentalists and others, however, have said increased ethanol production can increase carbon releases because it results in more corn production, leading to increased use of fertilizer and greater releases of nitrate. Synthetic and natural fertilizers also are a leading source of water pollution. □



## Northern Ireland prosecutor says UK soldiers involved in Bloody Sunday won't face perjury charges

**LONDON (AP)** — Fifteen British soldiers who allegedly lied to an inquiry into Bloody Sunday, one of the deadliest days of the decades-long Northern Ireland conflict, will not face perjury charges, prosecutors said Friday.

There was insufficient evidence to convict the soldiers or a former alleged member of the Irish Republican Army about their testimony before an inquiry into the 1972 killings of 13 civilians by Britain's Parachute Regiment in Derry, also known as Londonderry, the Public Prosecution Service said. An initial investigation into the slayings on Jan. 30, 1972 concluded the soldiers were defending themselves from a mob of IRA bombers and gunmen. But a 12-year-long inquiry concluded in 2010 that soldiers unjustifiably opened fire on unarmed and fleeing civilians and then lied about it for decades.

Families of the victims were outraged by the decision. John Kelly, whose brother Michael was killed by paratroopers, spoke for the group and called it an "af-front to the rule of law."



Haze from smoke bombs released by British troops in the bogside district of Londonderry, Northern Ireland, on Feb. 1972.

Associated Press

"Why is it that the people of Derry cannot forget the events of Bloody Sunday, yet the Parachute Regiment, who caused all of the deaths and injury on that day, apparently cannot recall it?" Kelly said. "The answer to this question is quite simple but painfully obvious: The British Army lied its way through the conflict in the north." Although a quarter century has passed since the Good

Friday peace accord in 1998 largely put to rest three decades of violence involving Irish republican and British loyalist militants and U.K. soldiers, "the Troubles" still reverberate. Some 3,600 people were killed most in Northern Ireland, though the IRA also set off bombs in England. Only one ex-paratrooper from Bloody Sunday, known as Soldier F, faces prosecution for two murders and

five attempted murders. He was among the 15 soldiers who could have faced a perjury charge. While victims continue to seek justice for past carnage, the possibility of a criminal prosecution could soon vanish. The British government passed a Legacy and Reconciliation Bill last year that would have given immunity from prosecution for most offenses by militant groups and British

soldiers after May 1. But a Belfast judge ruled in February that the bill does not comply with human rights law. The government is appealing the ruling.

Attorney Ciaran Shiels, who represents some of the Bloody Sunday families, said they would not rule out further legal action.

"It is of course regrettable that this decision has been communicated to us only today, some 14 years after the inquiry's unequivocal findings, but less than two weeks before the effective enactment date of the morally bankrupt legacy legislation designed specifically to allow British Army veterans to escape justice for its criminal actions in the north of Ireland," Shiels said. Senior Public Prosecutor John O'Neill said the decision not to bring criminal charges was based on three things: accounts given by soldiers in 1972 were not admissible; much of the evidence the inquiry relied on is not available today; and the inquiry's conclusion that testimony was false did not always meet the criminal standard of proof. □

## The West African Sahel is becoming a drug smuggling corridor, UN warns, as seizures skyrocket

By DALATOU MAMANE and JACK THOMPSON

Associated Press

**NIAMEY, Niger (AP)** — Drug seizures soared in the West African Sahel region according to figures released Friday in a new U.N. report, indicating the conflict-ridden region is becoming an influential route for drug trafficking.

In 2022, 1,466 kilograms (3,232 pounds), of cocaine were seized in Mali, Chad, Burkina Faso and Niger compared to an average of 13 kilograms (28.7 pounds) between 2013 and 2020, said the report from the U.N. Office on Drugs and Crime.

Cocaine is the most seized drug in the Sahel after can-

nabis resin, the report said. The analysis comes as Senegal, which borders on the Sahel, announced Sunday a record-breaking cocaine seizure of 1,137 kilograms — the most ever intercepted on land and valued at \$146 million — near an artisanal mine in the east of the country. Incidents like this are becoming more common in the region: In one incident last year in December, the Senegalese navy seized a total of 3 tons of cocaine at sea. The location of the Sahel, lying south of the Sahara desert and running from the Atlantic to the Arabian Ocean, makes it a natural transit point for the increasing amount of cocaine pro-

duced in South America and destined for Europe. The trafficking has detrimental impacts for both peace and health, locally and globally, said Amado Philip de Andrés, UNODC Regional Representative in West and Central Africa. "The involvement of various armed groups in drug trafficking continues to undermine peace and stability in the region," said Philip de Andrés. The report said the drug trade provides financial resources to armed groups in the Sahel, where Islamic extremist networks have flourished as the region struggles with a recent spate of coups. Increased trafficking networks in the region is spilling



In this photo released by The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, shows officials burning seized drugs in Niamey, Niger, Monday, June 26, 2023.

Associated Press

out onto local markets and leading to higher drug consumption, said Lucia Bird, director of the West Africa

observatory of illicit economies at the Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime. □



# U.N. refugee agency tells Cyprus to stick to the law in its efforts at sea to thwart refugee boats

By **MENELAOS HADJICOSTIS**  
and **ABBY SEWELL**  
**Associated Press**

**NICOSIA, Cyprus (AP)** —

The United Nations' refugee agency said Friday that Cypriot efforts at sea to stop numerous Syrian refugee-laden boats departing Lebanon from reaching the European Union-member island nation mustn't contravene international human rights laws or put passengers at risk.

Cypriot authorities have reportedly dispatched police patrol vessels just outside Lebanese territorial waters to thwart boat loads of Syrian refugees from reaching the island about 110 miles (180 kilometers) away.

The Cypriot government says a crumbling Lebanese economy coupled with the uncertainty brought on by the Israeli-Hamas war and the recent tit-for-tat strikes between Israel and Lebanon has resulted in a huge number of rickety boats overloaded with migrants — almost all Syrians — reaching the island.

Earlier this week, Cypriot patrol craft reportedly intercepted five boats carrying hundreds of Syrian refugees and migrants. The boats turned back and the



**Migrants sit on a Cyprus marine police boat as they are safely brought to a harbor after being rescued from their own vessel off the Mediterranean island nation's southeastern coast, of Protaras, Cyprus, on Jan. 14, 2020.**

passengers disembarked safely. UNCHR spokesperson in Cyprus Emilia Strovolidou told The Associated Press that according to testimonies of passengers' relatives, Cypriot authorities "forcibly pushed back" the boats using "violence" and "techniques to destabilize the boat."

Strovolidou said the U.N. agency was "not in a position to confirm" those testi-

monies.

A Cypriot senior official strenuously denied that any coercion was used in any way to get the boats to return to Lebanon, insisting that the Cypriot government doesn't engage in any pushbacks and acts "fully in accordance with international law."

The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he cannot disclose

details of ongoing operations, dismissed as "lies" allegations that Cypriot authorities resorted to using any type of force.

Strovolidou said Cyprus is also bound by international law not to return individuals to any country which could in turn deport them to their homeland where they could be at risk of harm or persecution.

The Lebanon office of UN-

HCR said in a statement that it was aware of more than 220 people who had disembarked from the returned boats in northern Lebanon on Wednesday. Of those, 110 were refugees registered with UNHCR and all of them were released, it said.

Saadeddine Shatila, executive director of the Cedar Center for Legal Studies, a Lebanon-based human rights organization that tracks migration issues, said his group had information that the Lebanese army had detained and possibly deported Syrians from at least one of the returning boats who weren't registered with UNCHR.

The Lebanese army has in the past occasionally deported all Syrians aboard seized migrant boats, including registered refugees, a practice that drew an outcry from human rights organizations.

Lebanese political officials have been calling for years for the international community to either resettle the refugees in other countries or assist in returning them to Syria, and security forces have stepped up deportations of Syrians over the past year. □

**Associated Press**

# Brazil's president creates two new Indigenous territories, bringing total in his term to 10

By **MAURICIO SAVARESE**  
**Associated Press**

**SAO PAULO (AP)** — President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva on Thursday announced the creation of two new Indigenous territories for Brazil, bringing the total number of new reserves during this term to 10.

The Cacique Fontoura reserve will be in Mato Grosso state and the Aldeia Velha territory will be in Bahia state. They will cover a combined total area of almost 132 square miles (342 square kilometers).

Speaking at a ceremony in Brasilia, Lula said Indigenous peoples should be patient as he seeks to fulfill

his pledge of creating 14 new territories.

Lula's predecessor, Jair Bolsonaro, had encouraged

widespread development of the Amazon both legal and illegal and made good on his pledge to not demarcate a single centimeter of additional Indigenous land.

Lula took office in 2023 pledging to change that, but Indigenous rights activists hoped he would move faster. Last year, he demarcated six territories in April and two more in September.

The Brazilian president said during his speech that the latest two new territories would not be enough. He cited legal issues for the delay in setting aside additional lands.

"I know you have some concern because you were expecting six Indigenous lands. We decided to authorize two, and that frustrated some of our friends," Lula said, standing next to his Indigenous peoples minister, Sônia Guajajara, who wore a traditional yellow feather headdress. "I did this so I wouldn't lie to you. It is better to solve the problems instead of just authorizing it."

The four envisioned Indigenous territories that were not authorized are occupied by farmers who have ownership rights to those lands, Brazil's government said. □



**Brazil's President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva and Minister of Indigenous Peoples Sonia Guajajara arrive to the closing ceremony of the 1st Ordinary Meeting of the National Council for Indigenous Policy, in Brasilia, Brazil, Thursday, April 18, 2024.**

**Associated Press**



## Visit the island's hidden natural pools

**(Oranjestad)—Amongst the countless beaches surrounding the island that are well-known and frequently visited, there are an additional two “hidden” natural pools that are situated in the northern coast of the island, two ideal stops in your tour itinerary.**

### Conchi (Natural Pool)

For many years, Conchi was the only natural pool that we had on the island. Located in the Arikok National Park, near Boca Keto and the Daimari Ranch, Conchi—also known “Cura di Turtuga (Turtle’s Cove) or just Natural Pool—is reachable with any 4x4 vehicle or by foot if you’re up for a long hike. However, since it is part of the National Park, you must first get permission from park management to enter. You would have to purchase a day pass, and receive a wristband as proof of payment. Once you’ve completed that, you are set!

If you decide to hike from the entrance of the Arikok National Park, this is also possible: do bring plenty of protective clothing and enough water and food—it could take you up to three hours to hike there!

However, when you eventually do get there, you will be greeted with crystal blue water surrounded by a natural rock formation that protects you from the wild waves on the other side. Though the pool is located on the northern side of the island (where the sea is largely rough and largely no suitable for swimming), the pool itself is very calm. It’s also relatively deep, and you can climb up the rocks and jump in!

### Cave Pool

This relatively new pool appeared just a few years ago, when a part of the dried up coral floor broke off and created a partition between the ocean and what is now the natural

pool that is hidden there. Because it’s still so new, there is no official name for it, but most people just call it the cave pool.

Just like the Conchi, the new natural pool is situated on the northern coast of Aruba. However, this pool is much easier to reach with any type of vehicle, and there is no hiking needed. This spot has also become a regular stop for touring visitors.

When you get there, maybe you won’t be able to spot the pool immediately, because you will probably notice the moon-shaped lagoon where wild northern waves crash into each other. Sounds scary, but if you look down on your right, you’ll see a calm, crystal blue little pool in the corner. To get there, you have to climb down some stairs. Be careful when climbing down and follow the instructions of your tour guide if you have one.



back up the boulder.□

And just like Conchi, this pool also has a jumping spot, and a rope to climb

**Picture of cave pool is credited to RockaBeach Tours**

## Why You Should Not Miss Aruba's Free City Center Street Car Tour



**ORANJESTAD** - Aruba's City Center Street Car - or as we call it in Dutch; “Tram van Oranjestad” - is a single track tram line in Oranjestad, the capital city of Aruba. It was inaugurated on 22 December 2012, being the first and so far the only passenger rail service on Aruba and the rest of the Dutch Caribbean.

an. There are two trolleys, a single-deck one with 42 seats and a double-decker with 64 seats. The line was inspired by the popular battery-powered streetcar operation at the Grove in Los Angeles, USA. Aruba's streetcars are powered by hydrogen fuel cells, which are charged by the island's year-round trade winds.

Caya Betico Croes, mostly referred to as our “main street” has been developed into a pollution-free pedestrian mall. The double-decker offers you a 360 degree view of the downtown area with a picture perfect scenery of the island's clear blue skies. Who would not enjoy a ride on this beautiful and naturally air-conditioned vehicle? The tour consists of a total of 9 stops approximately

200 meters apart from each other; all stops are clearly marked. The tram will bring you close to different museums, historical plazas, monuments, the Protestant church, Aruba's high-end mall, retail shops, and a variety of local and international cuisine restaurants. The “I love Aruba” trademark also belongs to that list. The third stop on the route is close to a 5-minute walk to the famous Renaissance Marina showcasing

luxurious yachts and Aruba's blue waters.

The “Tram van Oranjestad” starts from a balloon loop near the Port of Call and serves the downtown area and ends at Plaza Nicky. The first ride starts at 10:00 am sharp with intervals of 25minutes. The last trolley departs from the cruise port at 5:00pm. Don't miss this tour of the beautiful Aruba's City Center- it is free for all!□





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## Visit the island's popular cave sites!

(Oranjestad)—Among the endless sea of dark brown sand and cacti, there are two caves hidden in the outskirts of San Nicolas, in the north-eastern area of the island. These caves, The Quadirikiri cave and The Fontein Cave are open to visitors of the Arikok National Park, so if you ever decide to take an "off-road" tour in the park, be sure to visit these prehistoric caves... and be sure to bring a flashlight!

### Quadirikiri Cave

Known for its two chambers accompanied by a skylight, the Quadirikiri Cave is the most popular cave among locals and tourists, as it is easy to walk through and provides great lighting for pictures.

As with all prehistoric or ancient sites, there is always a folk legend that adds to the lore and mystery of the site. The Quadirikiri cave is no different. The most well-known legend behind the cave could be considered as Aruba's first love story, as it tells the tale of the undying love between the chief's daughter and her beloved. As legend would have it, the chief disapproved of

his daughter's choice of lover, as he thought him unworthy. Stubborn and filled with anger, the daughter refused to turn away her beloved.

So, the chief decided to lock her up in the Quadirikiri Cave, in hopes that she would soon calm down and turn away her lover. Her beloved, in turn, was locked away in the Tunnel of Love (Now known as the Huliba Cave).

Through the pathways underneath the Tunnel of Love running up to the Quadirikiri cave, the two love birds found each other, and refused to let each other go. Because of their stubbornness, they both died in the Quadirikiri Cave, their ascending spirits burning two holes in the ceiling of the cave. This is why the cave has two holes through which sunlight passes through to illuminate the chamber.

Though there have been discoveries of Amerindian drawing on the wall, these have mostly been ruined by vandalism. However, the Fontein Cave further up north, provides a better glimpse in prehistoric



Amerindian paintings.

### Fontein Cave

Longer than the Quadirikiri Cave, the Fontein Cave contains pathways that stretch to the limestone walls further down. Here is also where prehistoric drawings can be seen. Though this cave does not have its own legend, this was speculated to have been occupied—or at least used by prehistoric Arawak settlers on the island for rituals and other spiritual ceremonies.

### The Huliba Cave/ Tunnel of Love

The Huliba Cave, formerly known as the Tunnel of Love, was once open to the public, and was the biggest and most accessible of all three caves. This cave had five chambers, including one that is heart-shaped. This cave had narrow stairs that led to long pathways deep into the cave, with a staircase leading to the exit on the other side. In one of the chambers, there used to be the carving of the Virgin Mary, put there for the protection of the cave.

However, the Huliba Cave has been permanently closed for a few years now, as a way to preserve the bat population that lives in the cave. These Long Tongue

Fruit Bats and Insect Eater Bats are very important to the ecosystem of the island. Though this cave is no longer accessible to the public, it surely is interesting to learn more about the history of these caves and the Awarak tribes that resided or utilized them.

Do note that these caves are very dark, humid, hot, and are inhabited by bats. Do wear comfortable clothing and shoes, as the pathways in these caves may be rough and bumpy, and don't forget to bring a flashlight!☐



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## National Park Arikok: Aruba's biggest nature conservation

The National Park Arikok comprises almost 18 % of the island. Its rugged terrain, desert-like hills filled with tall cacti, breathtaking coastline and protected local flora and fauna welcome you to be explored. There are numerous animals to discover, for example the sea turtle who lays his eggs on the park's beaches.

The national park Arikok takes you on a memorable journey of the islands past offering unique geological, cultural and historical sites. These can all be enjoyed and explored either on your own or during guided tours. A wide variety of educational and informative programs and fun activities is available.

Did you know that four of the in total seven species of sea turtle lay their eggs on Aruba's beaches? In the national park, a Least Tern (*Sternula antillarum*) keeps a strict eye on a very special event taking place below on the beach: a majestic Leatherback (*Dermochelys coriacea*) heads back to sea after laying her eggs, while another nest laid 2 months ago by the same female hatches—a very rare occurrence of daytime nesting and hatching. Sea turtles prefer nesting in the cool and dark hours of the night. And hatchlings usually wait for the cue of cooling surface sand before emerging.

### Nature Conservation

The protected area of Na-



tional Park Arikok was officially established in 2000. Arikok National Park is a 34 square kilometers (7907 acres) of natural area, located at the north-eastern part of Aruba which contains examples of most of the island's flora and fauna against a backdrop of great geological complexity. We are proud to state that approximately 18% of the total land area of Aruba is assigned as a National Park, to protect and preserve the flora, fauna, geology and historical remains present within Arikok National Park.

### The Landscape

There is a great geological variety within the park. The main aspects are the rough hills of the volcanic Aruba lava formation, the mysterious rocks of the batholithic quartz-diorite/tonalite, and

the limestone rocks from fossilized coral. The two tallest hills on the island are situated within the park. Jamanota hill 188 meters (617 ft) and Arikok hill 176 meters (577 ft), from which the name of the park is derived.

The line of the permanently wind-and-wave beaten North Coast is broken by several bays (boca's). Most of them are small yet impressive inlets at the mouth of dry riverbeds. Some of these bays (boca's) are spectacular sights, adorned with white, sandy beaches and sand dunes, as is the case at Boca Prins and Dos Playa.

Arikok is also home to Conchi, Aruba's most important natural attraction; also known as The Natural Pool. The journey to the Pool is and adventure by itself and

only possible by foot, horse, ATV or 4x4 vehicle.

### Cultural and Historical components

There are a number of sites within the park that attest to the history of Aruba. The Caquetío Indians left rock paintings in Cunucu Arikok and Fontein Cave. The bird drawing in the park logo is a copy of one of these historical artistic expressions.

Old plantation (Cunucus) sites tell the story of an active yet challenging agricultural past.

These Cunucus were also residential areas for the few families that worked the land. These families found ways to survive in the difficult conditions, and were able to erect their homes with materials found in the area. Two of these adobe

houses have been restored. Park rangers are learning many of the old building techniques in order to preserve this unique Aruban mud-house. At Cunucu Arikok and near Plantation Prins you can find these adobe houses.

### Park Management

For the management of the park, a dedicated foundation "Fundacion Parke Nacional Arikok" (FPNA), known today as the Aruba National Park Foundation was established in July 2003. In February 2017, mangrove and wetland RAMSAR site #198 Spanish Lagoon was annexed to Arikok National Park due to its importance as a feeding and breeding area for water birds and as a nursery area for a variety of marine organisms. With this addition, the areas under FPNA management increased by 70 hectares while the amount of species of flora and fauna to be conserved to over 250. On December 21st, 2018 (AB 2018 no. 77) Parke Marino Aruba – currently consisting of four marine protected areas (MPAs) – was officially established and subsequently brought under management of FPNA. In 2019 management plans will be established for the new MPAs which include: coral reefs, sea grass beds, mangrove systems, a large diversity of breeding seabirds. Parke Marino Aruba also contains potential shark nursery areas, endangered sea turtle nesting beaches and marine mammal nursery areas. □



## Blackstone Beach

(Oranjestad)—Named after its most recognizable feature, the Blackstone Beach almost represents the opposite of the typical Aruban beaches. For one, it has black sand and is covered in black smooth stones. Secondly, it lies on the northern side of the is-

land, away from the white sandy beaches of in the southern region. So, if you feel up for something different—or if it's opposite day, visit the Blackstone Beach.

Blackstone Beach shows the more natural side of Aruba: the stones that cov-

er the beaches and the shape of it has been crafted for thousand years via volcanic eruptions, coral reef movements and wave activity of the rural northern part of the island.

Located further east to the Natural Bridge and Andicuri Beach, the Blackstone Beach is relatively easy to access. Once you get passed the Ayo Rock Formation, take the Andicuri road leading up to Andicuri Beach. There, you can park your car and take a 1km hike towards Blackstone Beach.



This beach forms part of the Arikok National Park and is therefore a site that is preserved. This is why it is also relatively untouched by commercial influences. Despite being called a beach, do note that it is not advised to swim in the water, as the current is very strong

and can easily stray you further in the wild ocean. However, you can still enjoy a spectacular view of the stones and the northern ocean that stretches out in front of the beach and take a picture with your friends or family! □



## Episode CXX – 120 - In the beginning



The construction of the first high rise hotel, Aruba Caribbean Hotel and Casino, attracted the jetset and famous Hollywood movie stars. It was beneficial for our island seeing that there was a yearly-increasing wave of sight-seers in

the Caribbean area due to this architectural landmark. In this manner, it was hoped that a considerable source of income would be opened up for the island.

Before July 1958, this area known as Palm Beach,

could only be reached by secondary roads, now it was connected with Oranjestad and the airfield by a modern boulevard sided by palm trees that opened on May 1st, 1958. The coastal area that meant to be a tourist resort zone is now of

easy access.

The intrinsic nature and indispensable quality of this travel destination, relies on its age old desert landscape, its surrounding oceans, beaches and its cultural heritage, but most of all is its friendly protagonists of our tourist industry, being the islands key attraction factor and its success.

Since 1950 plans were made to attract cruise ships to the Paardenbaai (Horses' Bay) in Oranjestad. The arrival of the first cruise ship of that time, The Trade Wind, calling port on February 1955, had become a historical event. Receptions and festivities had been organized. A welcome committee, consisting of Aruban girls dressed for the occasion in specially designed gowns, stood ready on the quay to guide the tourists to the Oranjestad shopping-center. Almost all cars on the island streamed to the harbor, traffic jams were caused, and one wondered whether the Aruban population were setting forth to see the tourists or whether the tourists

were here to see the island.

In 1961 the quaint restaurant De Olde Molen (The Old Mill) was established here. A mill was purchased in the Netherlands and carried across the ocean for this purpose.

But in this time, we stand at that point of redefine the product destination. Reconsider all assets. Recognize and respect local essences of existing cultural aspects and all native species, since these two are at risk of becoming endangered and even extinct. It is in hand of the general public to requesting legislative protection safeguarding and guaranteed protection for our ecosystem's existence for our next generation and of our visitors. We must create awareness of our, yet unfathomed assets which could be lost without ever knowing of their existence.

To understand Aruba's its origins, history and culture, we invite you to book your visit for a very personal cultural encounter going back over generations. Participate and enjoy an educational experience in to Aruba's core. Come join us by confirming your participation, every morning at [etnianativa03@gmail.com](mailto:etnianativa03@gmail.com) or through WhatsApp 297 592 2702. □



**Article by: Etnia Nativa**

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## Aruba: the legend behind its name

**(Oranjestad)—Most folkloric tales and legends in Aruba revolve around our indigenous ancestors, who came from mainland Venezuela, and discovered the island and made it into their new home. This particular legend tells the story of the birth of the Aruba name.**

The legend follows the life of Arua, an indigenous Cacique originally from Aroa in the Falcon state in Venezuela in the year 50 AD. Arua had a son around the year 70 AD with his wife Shira, who they named Corobori. When Corobori was old enough, he joined his father on the usual boat trip to the islands of Curacao and Bonaire to gather salt.

On their way back to Mainland Venezuela, they were caught up in a heavy rain storm—a side effect from a passing, but far away, hurricane. Of course, because of the lack of motors and sail, their boat was left in the mercy of the heavy winds. After a while, the storm started to pass, and the clouds began to clear up. Finally able to see around them, the Cacique spotted land approximately an hour away. So, they started to row in that direction until they reached the coast.

Once they arrived on what they thought was Venezuela, they decided to stay the night and fix their kayak. The next morning, the Cacique ordered his son and a few warriors to go find any sign of population in the area: "Corobori," Arua said. "Don't come back without news. It's in your hands how long we stay here till we find our family. So, if you need to take a week to gather information, we will wait for you."

"Don't worry," Corobori replied. "As soon as we have any information, we will let you know." Armed with arrows and spears, backpacks filled with food and water containers, they set off. They climbed several small hills, but no sign of a village. They crossed different dry riverbeds, but no sign of anything. When the sun finally descended, they found themselves near a fairly tall hill and decided to climb it for a better view of a village. This hill was called Pan Dushi or Orcuyo, which today we call Hooiberg.

The next morning, they could clearly see that they have landed on an island, but an unfamiliar one at that. When Corobori went back to where his father was waiting, he told him the news: "Father Arua, you have just discovered an island, but it is not Curacao or Bonaire. Far in the south, we saw the big mountains of our homeland Venezuela, which we could have never seen on the other island. This leads us to believe we are on a new island. But that's not all. When the sun came up, we saw in the distance a glowing plain, which we think may be salt."

The Cacique was pleased to hear of his son's findings. He decided to stay a couple days on the newly-discovered island in search for salt. The next morning they ascended Hooiberg again and stayed to see if they could find nearby smoke, indicating an inhabitant village. But they found nothing. So they went back to their initial arrival settlement, now known as Santo Largo in Savaneta. The next morning they hiked along the Spaans Lagoen near the Mangel Halto Beach and reached the area of Bushiri. There, they boarded their kayaks and heading to what we know now as Malmok, where they found rocks of salt. After a couple days of exploring the island and gathering some salt rocks, they left for Venezuela, where they were reunited with their families.

Throughout the year, they travelled back and forth to Aruba, collecting salt. After a while they settled on the island, generations of families living along the coast. Corobori was the first indigenous inhabitant in our history to explore the entirety of the island.

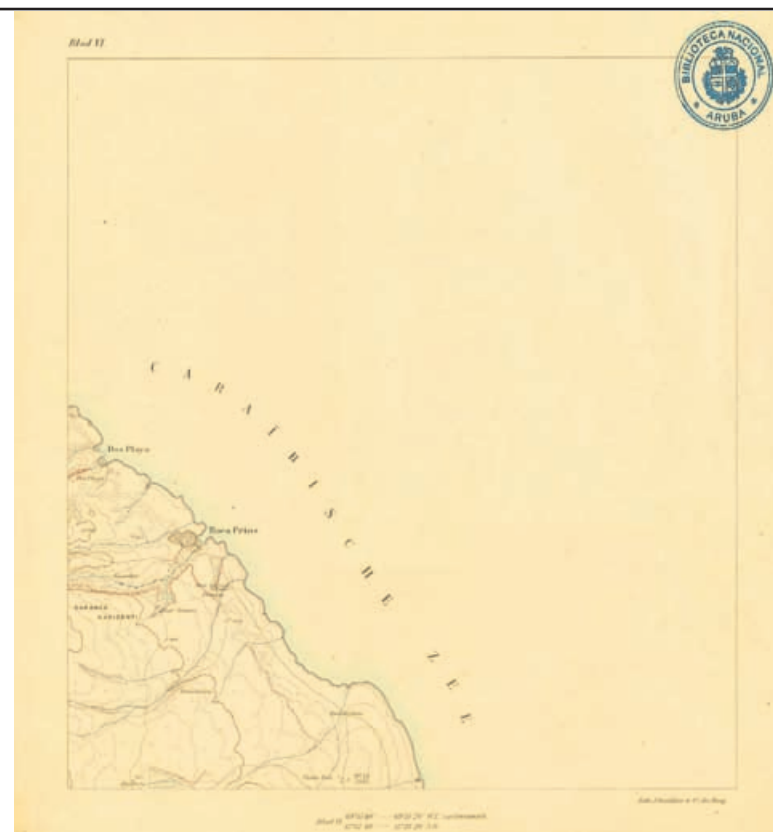
Arua, after decades as the leader of his tribe, spent his last days on the island. Having reached 80 years old, he called for his family on his death bed. In his hammock, he said: "My children, many years have passed, and I've asked my warrior to bring me back to the island so I can laid to rest. The God of living has given me the gift of life to see my son, grandchildren and great grandchildren. But now he is calling me home. Corobori, my torch is now passed to you. Guide our people, and be the leader you were always meant to become. If one day you leave my island, do not forget that it is also yours. This is my last wish: When I die, bury me in our maize plantation."

And so when the Cacique passed away, his wishes were granted and he was laid to rest in the area we now know as the Paradera Cemetery. Where he used to live, they built the Paradera Church.

And that is the tale of what inspired the Aruba name. In the generations that lived or travelled back and forth to the island, there were many familiar names\*, like Guadiriki, a warrior who was there when the island got discovered and his son, whom he called Huliba; Corobori and his children, Corodori, Camacuri and Turibana, Masiduri; and Malmok, the 13-year-old boy who alerted the Cacique when the Caribes attacked.

Familiar names: all these names are familiar to Arubans, as these are the names of places and plants on the island.

**Source: Un storia di e Indjan Arua (A story of the Indian Arua) by Adolf (Dufi) Kock**





**CROSSWORD**

By **THOMAS JOSEPH**

**ACROSS** 39 Binary

1 Really like digit  
7 Horn sound

11 Sitka's state

12 Trade show

13 Elect ceremony

14 Basic idea

15 Foils' kin

16 "I under-stand!"

17 Hot

18 A waste of time

19 Theater award

21 Negative link

22 Two-bar symbol

25 Letter before epsilon

26 Musical symbol

27 Stands

29 Striker's foe

33 Run, as color

34 Stable animal

35 Learning method

36 Exotic fruit

37 "Yeah, sure!"

38 Late hour

**DOWN**

1 Dance parties

2 Skip the

ceremony

3 Rubber source

4 Words after

"peek-aboo"

5 Enjoys Aspen

6 Solo in space

7 Sired

8 Leaving setting

9 Letter after delta

A	B	H	O	R		L	E	H	A	R
R	E	E	S	E		O	R	A	T	E
C	L	A	S	S		C	A	L	E	B
A	I	R		T	S	A		E	A	U
N	E	T		O	I	L		A	S	K
A	S	H	O	R	E		K	N	E	E
	A	L	E	R	T	E	D			
R	I	N	D		R	I	G	H	T	S
E	N	D		S	A	N		E	E	L
B	A	H		P	S	Y		A	N	Y
E	R	O	D	E		T	E	R	S	E
L	U	M	E	N		O	A	T	E	S
S	T	E	E	D		T	R	Y	S	T

**Yesterday's answer**

10 Peter Rabbit's creator  
16 Shot in the dark  
18 Does clerical work  
20 Revealed  
22 Ring setting  
23 More hushed

24 Reply to a knock  
25 Iranian city  
28 Handle  
30 Want badly  
31 So far  
32 Chili  
34 Robust  
36 Parrot or puppy

1	2	3	4	5	6		7	8	9	10
11							12			
13							14			
15						16				
17						18				
			19	20				21		
	22	23					24			
25				26						
27			28				29	30	31	32
33						34				
35						36				
37						38				
39						40				

4-20

AXYDLBAAXR  
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

**4-20 CRYPTOQUOTE**

LYNTOZ HF LJN Y XEYBZ

NJ SHFHN. HN HF MJPZ.

— UYOK FLKRZO

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: AND THE DAY CAME WHEN THE RISK TO REMAIN TIGHT IN A BUD WAS MORE PAINFUL THAN THE RISK IT TOOK TO BLOSSOM. — ANAIS NIN

**Cruise Schedule**

TUE	09	SYMPHONY OF THE SEAS	08.00	21.00	I	1
WED	10	CARNIVAL MAGIC	07.00	15.00	B	1
		NORWEGIAN PRIMA	10.00	20.00	C	1
		MARELLA VOYAGER	08.00	20.00	I	1
THU	11	MSC DIVINA	07.00	14.00	B	1
		RHAPSODY OF THE SEAS	08.00	18.00	C	1
FRI	12	CARNIVAL PRIDE	09.00	22.00	C	1
		NORWEGIAN SKY	10.00	20.00	I	1
SAT	13	NORWEGIAN JADE	07.00	20.00	C	1
TUE	16	RHAPSODY OF THE SEAS	08.00	21.00	B	1
		CARNIVAL HORIZON	09.00	22.00	C	1
WED	17	ODYSSEY OF THE SEAS	08.00	23.00	C	1
SAT	20	NORWEGIAN PRIMA	10.00	19.00	C	1

**Helpful tips for your stay on Aruba**

(Oranjestad)—When traveling to another country, especially for the first time, it is always better to be over-prepared than under-prepared. That is why we have a list of basic—but important—information that we think may come in handy to Aruba's visitors.

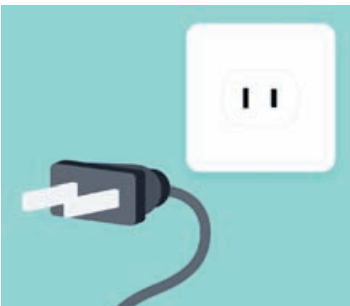
lets used on the island: type A with two flat prongs; type B with two flat and one grounding prong, and on occasion, type F with two round prong and two earth clips on the side. However, Type A is most commonly found in homes and establishments.

**Supermarket hours**



Supermarket hours may vary depending on where you are staying on the island. Generally though, most supermarkets are open from 8am to 9 or 10pm, Monday through Saturday. On Sundays, supermarkets generally close earlier; mostly around 2pm.

**Electrical power**



Aruba generally operates on 110V to 127V supply voltage and 60Hz. There are also three types of out-

**Drinking water**



The water that flows through the sinks of every house, hotels and other establishments is distilled and perfectly safe to drink. Aruba's drinking water exceeds WHO's international standards for water quality, so there is no need to buy bottled water from the store.

**Safety**



Since February 2024, Aruba has been categorized as the safest country in the Caribbean by The Telegraph, and many tourist that visit have often told us how they feel safe to explore the island or walk around at night. However, rare incidents do occurs, so keep yourself and your belongings safe.

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24/7



## Bitcoin's next 'halving' is right around the corner. Here's what you need to know



An advertisement for the cryptocurrency Bitcoin displayed on a tram, May 12, 2021, in Hong Kong.

Associated Press

By **WYATTE GRANTHAM-PHILIPS**

AP Business Writer

**NEW YORK (AP)** — Sometime in the next few days or even hours, the “miners” who chisel bitcoins out of complex mathematics are going to take a 50% pay cut effectively slicing new production of the world’s largest cryptocurrency in half.

That could have a lot of implications, from the price of the asset to the bitcoin miners themselves. And, as with everything in the volatile cryptoverse, the future is hard to predict. Here’s what you need to know.

### WHAT IS BITCOIN HALVING AND WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Bitcoin “halving,” a pre-programmed event that occurs roughly every four years, impacts the production of bitcoin. Miners use farms of noisy, specialized computers to solve convoluted math puzzles; and when they complete one, they get a fixed number of bitcoins as a reward. Halving does exactly what it sounds like it cuts that fixed income in half. And when the mining reward falls, so does the number of new bitcoins entering the

market. That means the supply of coins available to satisfy demand grows more slowly.

Limited supply is one of bitcoin’s key features. Only 21 million bitcoins will ever exist, and more than 19.5 million of them have already been mined, leaving fewer than 1.5 million left to pull from. So long as demand remains the same or climbs faster than supply, bitcoin prices should rise as halving limits output. Because of this, some argue that bitcoin can counteract

inflation still, experts stress that future gains are never guaranteed.

### HOW OFTEN DOES HALVING OCCUR?

Per bitcoin’s code, halving occurs after the creation of every 210,000 “blocks” where transactions are recorded during the mining process.

No calendar dates are set in stone, but that divvies out to roughly once every four years. The latest estimates expect the next halving to occur sometime late Friday or early Satur-

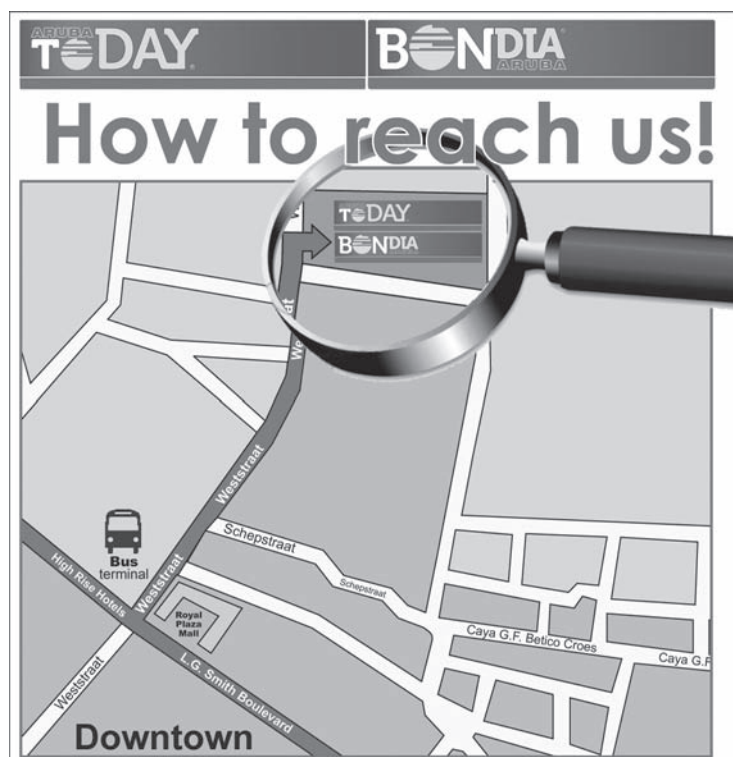
day.

### WILL HALVING IMPACT BITCOIN’S PRICE?

Only time will tell. Following each of the three previous halvings, the price of bitcoin was mixed in the first few months and wound up significantly higher one year later. But as investors well know, past performance is not an indicator of future results.

“I don’t know how significant we can say halving is just yet,” said Adam Morgan McCarthy, a research analyst at Kaiko. “The sample size of three (previous halvings) isn’t big enough to say ‘It’s going to go up 500% again,’ or something.”

At the time of the last halving in May 2020, for example, bitcoin’s price stood at around \$8,602, according to CoinMarketCap and climbed almost seven-fold to nearly \$56,705 by May 2021. □



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# Not a toddler, not a parent, but still love 'Bluey'? You're not alone

By **CHEYANNE MUMPHREY**

**Associated Press**

**PHOENIX (AP)** — A small blue dog with an Australian accent has captured the hearts of people across the world.

She's the title character of "Bluey," a kids' program consisting of seven-minute episodes that have enraptured children and adults alike. This week's release of its longest episode yet at a whopping 28 minutes prompted an outpouring of appreciation for the show, even from those who are neither toddler nor parent.

"Bluey" follows an Australian blue heeler who, along with her sister (a red heeler named Bingo), navigates the days between home and school. It's a favorite among children for its playful humor, but it also appeals to adults reminiscing about childhood.

"My childhood experience wasn't the greatest so I've always resonated with shows where life is good," says Miriam Neel, who lives in Colorado. "The parents in 'Bluey' enable imagination and creativity and really get involved with their kids, and I wish I had those experiences." Neel is 32 and has chosen not to have any children of her own. She says the show has become part of her morning routine and is often a go-to choice for background noise when



This image released by Disney+ shows a scene from the television series "Bluey."

**Associated Press**

she is working from home. "I'm not going to speak for the entire generation, but millennials find comfort in cartoons. It's what a lot of us grew up watching," she said. "And if I'm going to spend time watching something I'd rather watch something that doesn't make me afraid of the world, like any of the 'Law & Order' shows."

"Bluey," which now boasts more than 150 episodes, premiered in Australia in 2018 and began streaming on Disney+ in 2020. It also has been adapted into a digital series where famous fans like Bindi Irwin and Eva Mendes read some of the popular storybooks, and a live theater show that travels around the world.

The show has also won multiple awards, including the Australian Film Institute Award for best children's television drama every year since 2019 and an International Emmy Kids Award.

The series provides a child's perspective into morning routines, errands and chores, while also giving viewers a glimpse of what life is like for parents through mother Chilli and father Bandit.

This week's special episode, "The Sign," explores the emotions surrounding themes that resonate with both children and adults moving houses, marriage, infertility and relationships after divorce. In addition to these universal themes, the episode wraps up the third

season with Easter eggs for dedicated fans.

Lindsey Schmidt, 40, says the show's continuity keeps her family looking forward to more.

"There are so many callbacks to previous episodes," says Schmidt, who lives in Ohio with her husband and three children. "The shows that we watch with our kids regularly don't reflect our lives like this show does. These anthropomorphic dogs feel just like us." But there are mixed feelings about the ending of the episode **SPOILER** in which the Heeler family scraps their move.

Some families who relocate often for work found it unrealistic. Meg Korzon, 31, is in the process of a cross-

country relocation with her four children because her husband is in the military. It's her seventh move in 10 years.

"I was hoping it would be an episode that aligned itself with the realities of life, our lives, as a military family," she says. "I was selfishly disappointed because it could have been an episode about change and growth."

But the show does not shy away from other difficult topics and that is part of the charm for adults as well. "As a parent you aspire to be as good of parents as Chilli and Bandit are as parents.

They always have a great way of talking kids through issues," Schmidt's 40-year-old husband John says, adding that the couple often refers back to episodes when trying to explain things to their children. The series has touched on topics of aging, death and making friends as an adult. It also has introduced a character who uses sign language and another with ADHD.

Jacqueline Nesi, an assistant professor of psychiatry and human behavior at Brown University, notes that "Bluey" promotes self-regulation and conflict resolution for children and engaged parenting and patience for adults. □

# Taylor Swift drops 15 new songs on double album, 'The Tortured Poets Department: The Anthology'

By **MARIA SHERMAN**

**AP Music Writer**

**NEW YORK (AP)** — Could there be a Taylor Swift new album rollout without a few additional surprises? No.

On Friday, the pop star released her 11th album, "The Tortured Poets Department," an amalgamation of her previous work and reflecting the artist who — at the peak of her powers — has spent the last few years re-recording her life's work and touring its material, filtered through synth-pop anthems, breakup ballads,

provocative and matured considerations.

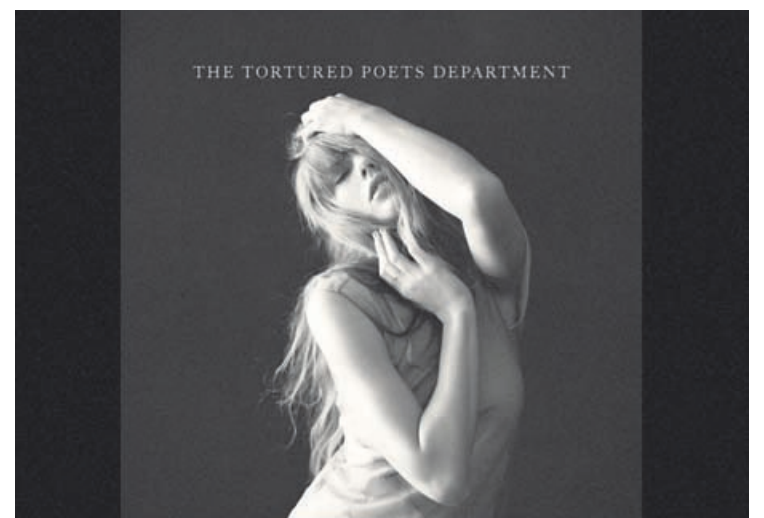
But that was midnight. At 2 a.m. Eastern, she released "The Tortured Poets Department: The Anthology," featuring 15 additional songs.

"I'd written so much tortured poetry in the past 2 years and wanted to share it all with you, so here's the second installment," Swift wrote in an Instagram caption. "And now the story isn't mine anymore... it's all yours."

The songs are a natural continuation of the first half of the album; many return

to her "evermore" and "folklore" sound, with an assist from her collaborator Aaron Dessner.

This is not Swift's first time surprising her fans, and certainly not her first time doing so with a surprise album release. A few months after "folklore" was released in 2020, she announced "evermore" would arrive at the midnight the same day. And speaking of midnight, she dropped a "3am" edition of "Midnights" featuring seven new tracks in 2022 a handful of hours after the original release. □



This cover image released by Republic Records show "The Tortured Poets Department" by Taylor Swift.

**Associated Press**



# At playoff time, NHL teams march to the beat of their goaltenders and count on them to save the day

By PAT GRAHAM

AP Sports Writer

**DENVER (AP)** — Colorado goaltender Alexandar Georgiev went home after a recent shaky outing and immediately watched film the car-racing thriller "The Fast and the Furious." Anything to keep his own mind from racing. It's playoff time, where teams march to the beat of their goaltenders. They want them laser-focused, full of confidence and ready to save the day.

There are quite a few teams going into the postseason with big decisions in net. That includes Boston, which could split the goaltending duties, and the Avalanche, where Georgiev led the league in wins (38) but also goals against (183). Not every team has a Connor Hellebuyck, the Winnipeg goaltender who will try to shutdown the Avalanche and is a favorite to capture the Vezina Trophy as the league's best.

"Your goalie (in the playoffs) is the most important thing, like a quarterback or a pitcher. You need them to be on top of their game," said former NHL goaltender Michael Leighton, who now lives in Windsor, Ontario, and runs a goalie academy. "If they're not, your team's in trouble."

It simply boils down to that.



Colorado Avalanche goaltender Alexandar Georgiev (40) makes a save against the Vegas Golden Knights during the second period of an NHL hockey game Sunday, April 14, 2024, in Las Vegas.

When a goalie is going good, everything seems to be going good.

"It gives us a ton of confidence," Jets defenseman Neal Pionk said of Hellebuyck's big-save ability. "It lets you play freely, make some plays.

Because when we play these good teams, they're going to make some plays no matter what we do. We could play a perfect game and still give up a few scoring chances and that's where the goalie helps us out."

All across the league, the situations vary in net heading into the playoffs:

**Nashville vs. Vancouver.** For Nashville, it's the Juuse Saros Show after leading the NHL in saves (1,672). Thatcher Demko is back from a knee injury for the Canucks.

**Florida vs. Tampa Bay.** Andrei Vasilevskiy has rounded into familiar stellar form for the Lightning after returning from back surgery earlier this season. Florida has its own star Russian goalie in Sergei Bobrovsky

(six shutouts).

**New York Rangers vs. Washington.**

With the Presidents' Trophy-winning Rangers, it's Igor Shesterkin, who won at least 36 games for a third straight season. Washington's Charlie Lindgren will be making his NHL postseason debut.

**Boston vs. Toronto.**

The Maple Leafs will rely on Ilya Samsonov while the Bruins have two standouts in Linus Ullmark and Jeremy Swayman.

**Edmonton vs. Los Angeles.**

Stuart Skinner is in the crease for Edmonton as a familiar foe awaits. The Kings used both Cam Talbot and David Rittich down the stretch as they prepare to face the Oilers for the third consecutive postseason.

**Carolina vs. the New York Islanders.**

Hurricanes goaltender Frederik Andersen is 9-1 in his 10 starts since his March 7 return, posting a league-best .951 save percentage while his 1.30 goals-against average is second among goalies with more than three starts in that span. Coach Patrick Roy figures to go with a red-hot Semyon Varlamov.

**Dallas vs. Vegas.**

Logan Thompson and Adin Hill each have compelling cases to be in the net for the defending champion Golden Knights. No such questions for Dallas, who will rely on Jake Oettinger (allowed two goals or less in 10 of his last 11 games). Last postseason, Oettinger was up-and-down.

The ups included his first playoffs shutout and the downs saw him pulled from two games.

"It's all about forgive and forget and one game at a time," Oettinger explained. "I learned a lot last year and the year before, and I feel like I'm ready for this one." □

## Sign of the times: NCAA approves coach-to-player helmet communication for 2024 football season



A Houston Texans staff member tests the helmet radio system before the first half of an AFC Wild Card NFL game between the Houston Texans and the Oakland Raiders, Saturday, Jan. 7, 2017, in Houston.

Associated Press

**INDIANAPOLIS (AP)** — College football is ready to put the signs away.

Following a sign-stealing scandal that rocked the sport and hung over Michigan's championship run in 2023, the NCAA's football oversight committee approved Friday the use of coach-to-player helmet communications in games for the 2024 season.

The football rules committee last month made a recommendation to allow but not require teams at the highest tier of Division I to use radio technology similar to what NFL teams use.

Only one player for each team will be permitted to be in communication with coaches while on the field. A green dot on the back of the helmet will be used to

identify that player.

The communication from the coach to the player will be turned off with 15 seconds remaining on the play clock or when the ball is snapped, whichever comes first. The rules committee had been moving toward coach-to-player communication in recent years, but it was slow to be implemented because of concerns that not every school could afford to do it in an equitable way.

During last year's bowl season, teams were permitted to experiment with helmet communication if both sides agreed to it. But no team was forced to use it and that will be the case going forward.

Teams can still choose to signal in plays. □





# WIN!

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**9:00PM - 11:00PM**  
Selecting 6 winners of a \$1,000 each in cash every hour.

**11:30PM**  
Selecting one finalist for the final drawing plus \$1,500 cash.

**12:00AM**  
Selecting 9 winners of \$500 each in slot credit.





## Olympic organizers unveil strategy for using artificial intelligence in sports

By **KELVIN CHAN**  
AP Business Writer

**LONDON (AP)** — Olympic organizers unveiled their strategy Friday to use artificial intelligence in sports, joining the global rush to capitalize on the rapidly advancing technology. The International Olympic Committee outlined its agenda for taking advantage of AI. Officials said it could be used to help identify promising athletes, personalize training methods and make the games fairer by improving judging. "Today we are making another step to ensure the uniqueness of the Olympic Games and the relevance of sport. To do this, we have to be leaders of change," IOC President Thomas Bach said at a press event in the velodrome at the Olympic Park in London, which hosted the summer games in 2012.



**Thomas Bach, IOC President speaks at the International Olympic Committee launch of the Olympic AI Agenda at Lee Valley VeloPark, in London, Friday, April 19, 2024.**

Associated Press

"We are determined to exploit the vast potential of AI in a responsible way," Bach said. The IOC revealed its AI master plan as it gears up to hold the Paris Olympics, which are set to kick off in just under 100 days. The IOC's AI plans also include using the technology

to protect athletes from online harassment and to help broadcasters improve the viewing experience for people watching from home. The IOC earns billions of dollars through the sale of broadcast rights for the games. Some AI projects will be rolled out at the Paris

games and the IOC has set up a working group on the technology to further drive its adoption in sport, Bach said, without being more specific. The local organizers of the Paris games have sparked controversy with their plans to use artificial intelligence for security, with a video surveillance system that includes AI-powered cameras to flag potential security risks such as abandoned packages or crowd surges. Digital watchdog groups fear that a proposal to legalize smart surveillance systems, even if only temporarily, will infringe on privacy, though the French government insists the systems won't use facial recognition technology. Asked about the concerns, Bach told reporters it's up to the authorities in the host country, not the IOC, to decide on "the best

tools to apply to secure the games." "What we have seen from the French government and from the authorities is that the efforts to ensure security in Paris are really, on a very wide scope, very professional. So we have all confidence in the French authorities," he said. Skier Lindsey Vonn said she was envious of the AI-powered tools that weren't available when she was starting out. Vonn said back in the day she took notes by hand in her performance diary on how different skis, boots and the temperature affected her performance. Nowadays, tablets are used to instantly crunch much more data, as well as give a side-by-side video comparison of the best racing line. AI can supercharge those analytical tools, she said. □